

Chapter Three: Response

What to do
During a Disaster

Alert and Warning System

Have a battery-powered or hand-cranked radio available to receive information and instructions.

The Emergency Alert System (EAS) uses local radio, television and cable broadcasters to alert the public to impending hazards and emergencies such as:

- ❖ Toxic release
- ❖ Flooding
- ❖ Mudslides
- ❖ Fire
- ❖ Earthquake
- ❖ Other natural or human-caused disasters

Some of the local “AM” radio stations where important information can be obtained during a disaster or emergency are:

- ❖ KCBS 740 AM
- ❖ KGO 810 AM
- ❖ KLIV 1590 AM
- ❖ Comcast Cable Television Channel 26
- ❖ San José Police Department’s immediate area station 1340 AM



During An Earthquake

When the ground begins to shake, stay calm . . .

Steps to Take

When you feel an earthquake: **DUCK** under a desk or sturdy table, stay under **COVER** until the shaking stops, and **HOLD** onto the desk or table. If it moves, move with it.

Watch out for falling plaster or ceiling tiles and stay away from:

- ❖ Windows
- ❖ Bookcases
- ❖ File cabinets
- ❖ Refrigerators
- ❖ Swinging doors
- ❖ Heavy mirrors
- ❖ Hanging plants
- ❖ Heavy objects that could fall
- ❖ Unsecured cabinets

After the shaking stops, calmly exit the structure.



Some additional tips for specific locations:

- ❖ If you are in a high-rise building and not near a desk or table, move against an interior wall and protect your head with your arms. Don't use elevators and don't be surprised if the fire alarm or sprinkler system activates.
- ❖ If you are outdoors, move to a clear area away from trees, power lines, signs, buildings and poles.
- ❖ If you are on a sidewalk near a building, duck into a doorway to protect yourself from falling bricks, glass and other debris.
- ❖ If you are driving, pull over to the side of the road and stop. Avoid overpasses, power lines and other hazards. Stay inside your vehicle until the shaking has stopped.
- ❖ If you are in a crowded store or other public place, do not rush for the exits. Move away from display shelves containing objects that could fall.
- ❖ If you are in a wheelchair, stay in it. Move to cover, lock your wheels and protect your head.
- ❖ If you are in a stadium or theatre, stay in your seat and protect your head with your arms. Do not try to leave until the shaking is over. Then leave in a calm, orderly manner.
- ❖ If no other cover is available, sit with your back against the wall. Make yourself as small as possible and cover your head and neck with your hands.

During A Fire

There are a number of safety guidelines that you can follow during a fire in or near your home.

A Fire in Your Home

- ❖ Your first priority should be to get yourself and your family out of the building safely. Familiarity with the primary exits (doors and windows) from each room, along with knowing the location of escape ladders and rope, could save your life.
- ❖ Do not open any door without first testing it with the back of your hand to see if the door, doorknob or hinges are hot. If they are, do not open the door.
- ❖ If the room or hallway is already filled with smoke, crawl low under the smoke, which contains deadly gases. Because heat rises, cleaner air will be near the floor.
- ❖ If you encounter smoke when using a primary exit, use an alternative escape route. If you must exit through smoke, crawl on your hands and knees, keeping your head 12 to 24 inches above the floor.
- ❖ A wet towel or blanket thrown over your head and shoulders may protect you from smoke or flying embers.
- ❖ Once outside, do not reenter the building. Call the fire department (9-1-1) from the nearest phone. You do not need coins to call 9-1-1 from a payphone.
- ❖ If the house is on fire and the escape routes are blocked, close the door and stuff towels or something similar in the cracks under the door to keep the smoke out. If you can safely get to the bathroom, wet the towels to provide more protection.
- ❖ If your clothes catch on fire, **Stop, Drop and Roll** until the flames are extinguished. Remove clothing and jewelry immediately and cool burned skin with cool water. Seek medical attention.

A Fast Burning Fire near Your Home

Prepare for Evacuation

- ❖ Listen to your local emergency broadcast radio stations for updates on the fire's direction and the safest escape routes. These stations include KCBS 740 AM, KGO 810 AM, and KLIV 1590 AM.
- ❖ Use a detailed map with your primary evacuation routes already highlighted. This is especially important in rural areas where roads can be difficult to find and follow.
- ❖ Choose two primary evacuation routes going different directions away from your neighborhood. Assess these routes for potential impediments such as downed trees, power lines or overpasses. Your route might include hiking trails, bicycle paths or gates through a neighbor's yard.
- ❖ Move your car off the street so that you don't block emergency vehicles.
- ❖ Park with the front of the car facing the street. Shut the doors and roll up the windows.
- ❖ Begin assembling your irreplaceable possessions (e.g., photo albums, original art, medications, address book, vital documents).
- ❖ Confine your pets so they don't run away and you can bring them with you if you need to leave quickly.
- ❖ Arrange temporary housing at a friend's or relative's home outside the threatened area.

Voluntary Evacuation

- ❖ Assemble your disaster supplies to take with you. If time permits, before leaving your house, remember to:
- ❖ Shut off utilities.
- ❖ Close windows, vents, doors, non-combustible window coverings or blinds.
- ❖ Remove flammable window coverings and move them and other flammable items away from the windows into the center of the room.
- ❖ Open the fireplace damper and close the screen.

- ❖ Let people know you are okay by leaving a white flag that is visible from the street.
- ❖ Go to one of the predetermined places near your home and wait to meet your family.

If Evacuation Is Not Possible

- ❖ If the roads out of your neighborhood become impassable due to abandoned vehicles or the approaching fire, evacuate on foot or bicycle using trails.
- ❖ Look for a storm drain or any area with water and get yourself wet.
- ❖ Find an area that has already burned or is clear of vegetation, or lie in a ditch and cover all areas of your exposed skin.
- ❖ If you are evacuating by car and become trapped by a fast moving fire, close the windows and vents. Cover yourself and lie on the floor. Cover the windows with sunshades, mylar blankets or anything that will help reflect the heat of the fire as it approaches.
- ❖ If you are trapped in your home and have no escape route, close all windows and doors. Leave them unlocked. Post a help sign in the window for emergency personnel. Stay away from outside walls. Use a damp towel to filter smoke from the air you breathe.

Chemical Emergency

Listen to an emergency broadcast radio station for critical information such as KCBS 740 AM, KGO 810 AM or KLIV 1590 AM.

Shelter in Place

- ❖ Stay inside.
- ❖ Close doors, windows and fireplace damper.
- ❖ Turn off fans, heating and air conditioning systems.
- ❖ Go to an above-ground room with the fewest number of doors and windows.
- ❖ Keep your emergency supplies handy.
- ❖ If you can, try to:
 - Wet some towels and jam them in the cracks under the doors
 - Use plastic garbage bags to cover windows, outlets and heat registers
- ❖ If you are told there is danger of an explosion, close the window shades, blinds or curtains and stay away from the windows.
- ❖ If you think the chemical has entered your home, cover your mouth and nose with a wet cloth.
- ❖ Stay in the room and listen to the radio until you are told that all is safe or that you should evacuate.
- ❖ Call 9-1-1 to report a life-threatening emergency.

If Told to Evacuate

- ❖ Take your wallet and any medicine you might need for the next 24 hours.
- ❖ Cover your mouth and nose with a wet dish towel or cloth.
- ❖ Wear safety goggles if you have them.
- ❖ If you cannot take your animals, confine them to an interior hallway or closet without windows or doors to the outside. Be sure they have plenty of food and water.
- ❖ Evacuate by car, if possible. Close the windows, vents and air conditioner.
- ❖ Be aware that smoke from fires in an industrial area might contain hazardous materials.



During Severe Weather

If it has been raining hard for several hours or steadily for several days, be alert to the possibilities of floods, landslides, or mudslides.

Storm Watches and Warnings

A winter storm **watch** means a storm with severe cold weather or heavy rain is possible. A winter storm **warning** means severe cold or flooding is occurring or will occur very soon. Your local radio and TV stations will provide current storm information.

When a Watch for Winter Storm or Flooding Is Issued

- ❖ Continue listening to your radio or TV to get more information.
- ❖ Be alert to changing conditions.
- ❖ Avoid unnecessary travel.

When a Warning for Flooding Is Issued

- ❖ Move your furniture and valuables to higher floors in your home.
- ❖ Fill your car's gas tank in case an evacuation notice is issued.
- ❖ Use your telephone only for family emergency needs or to report dangerous conditions.
- ❖ If you are not at home, head for high ground and stay away from the flooding areas.
- ❖ Do not try to cross flowing water that is above your knees. You could be swept away by strong currents.
- ❖ If you must travel in the storm, let someone know your destination, your route and when you expect to arrive. If you do not arrive, help can be sent along your predetermined route.
- ❖ Do not try to drive on a flooded road. You could become stranded and trapped.
- ❖ If your car stalls while you are driving in flooding areas, abandon it immediately and seek higher ground. Many people drown while trying to rescue their cars.

Acts of Terrorism

Protect yourself against terrorism by being more aware.

The threat of terrorism has been brought home to us in a shockingly personal manner. This is not a new threat and you can do something about it. For years, citizens of San José have successfully prepared for a variety of potential disasters. The following information can help at home, at work, in your vehicle or while using public transportation.

Get the Facts

While terrorist attacks with chemical, biological or nuclear agents are possible, the likelihood of their use is not high.

- ❖ Chemical agents are poisonous gases, liquids, or solids. They are difficult to manufacture and to deliver in quantity. For example, the Pentagon estimates that a ton of sarin would be necessary to produce 10,000 casualties.
- ❖ If a chemical attack occurs, authorities would likely instruct residents either to evacuate immediately or seek shelter where they are and seal the premises. Do not leave the shelter, even to help victims unless instructed to do so.
- ❖ Similar instructions might follow a biological threat. Biological agents, such as contagious smallpox or non-contagious anthrax, might be dispersed as airborne particles and be used to contaminate food or water. Anyone exposed should see a doctor immediately. Biological agents are organisms or toxins that have illness-producing effects. Again, they are difficult to manufacture and to deliver. Aum Shinrikyo, with millions of dollars in funding and a sophisticated staff, was unable to produce a biological weapon after five years of trying.
- ❖ Nuclear agents are substances that generate harmful radiation. Nuclear devices and materials are closely monitored and difficult to obtain.

The preferred terrorist weapon of choice continues to be conventional explosives. They can be easily manufactured and transported, as we saw in the Oklahoma City bombing. Fortunately, good physical security practices and public awareness can help prevent this type of attack.

Accept Responsibility for Your Own Safety

An aware and informed public is our best defense against terrorism. We must all do our part to keep our community safe. Terrorism is a crime and crime prevention strategies work very well. These include:

- ❖ Be aware of your surroundings. Notice where emergency exits are located. Think ahead about how to evacuate a building, subway or congested public area in a hurry.
- ❖ Report suspicious objects, packages, vehicles or persons to the appropriate authorities.
- ❖ Beware of mail that is unexpected or comes from an unfamiliar sender, is addressed to someone who no longer lives or works at the address, has no return address or the return address is different from the postmark, is of unusual weight, given its size or is lopsided or oddly shaped. Also of possible concern is mail marked “Personal” or “Confidential”, or mail with protruding wires, strange odors or stains. Do not open this mail. Call the police.
- ❖ Cooperate with security procedures at your place of work and in public places.
- ❖ If told to stay inside your home, lock all windows and exterior doors. Turn off fans, heating and air conditioning systems.
- ❖ Take precautions when traveling. Be aware of conspicuous or unusual behavior. Do not accept packages from strangers. Do not leave luggage unattended.

If a Terrorist Attack Occurs

- ❖ Remain calm and follow the instructions of emergency personnel.
- ❖ Be alert to secondary hazards such as falling debris or additional devices.
- ❖ Monitor your Emergency Alert System radio stations, such as KCBS 740 AM, KGO 810 AM or KLIV 1590 AM, for information and bulletins.
- ❖ Follow the instructions of emergency personnel.
- ❖ Do not rush to the scene to volunteer. The Volunteer Center of Silicon Valley has been designated as a processing center for people who want to volunteer in a disaster. They can be contacted at 408-247-1126.

If You are Trapped in Debris

- ❖ Stay in your area so that you don't kick up dust. Cover your mouth and nose with a handkerchief or clothing.
- ❖ Tap on a pipe so rescuers can hear where you are. Use a whistle if one is available. Shout only as a last resort. Shouting can cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

